DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 374 077 SP 035 214

AUTHOR Benton, Gary J.; Richardson, Gloria D.
TITLE A Professional Development School's Impact on Student Teachers' Attitudes.
PUB DATE Nov 93
NOTE 19p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, November 10-12, 1993).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Analysis of Variance; Classroom Techniques; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; Partnerships in Education; Preservice Teacher Education; *Professional Development Schools; *Student Teacher Attitudes; Student Teachers; *Student Teaching; Teacher Student Relationship
IDENTIFIERS Mississippi; State University Meridian

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine if student teachers' attitudes toward their student teaching experiences differed significantly after the addition of professional development school experiences. Two groups of student teachers (Spring 1992 and Spring 1993) were compared using the Mississippi Student Teaching Attitude Inventory (MSTAI) constructed by Benton and Richardson (1990). Each group consisted of 35 students. A one-way analysis of variance revealed significant differences for 7 of the 38 items. These items consisted of the following statements, to which students responded using a Likert scale: "I enjoy teaching"; "My student teaching responsibilities do not restrict my nonprofessional responsibilities"; "I feel that I am prepared to teach"; "I feel prepared to meet the needs of individual learners"; "My students regard me with respect and have confidence in my professional ability"; "My students have the opportunity for enrichment activities daily"; and "Using more than two teaching methods during a class period is not difficult." Implications for the use of the MSTAI include: longitudinal group comparisons, restructuring of courses and programs, and utilization of findings to implement further professional development opportunities and changes. (Author/IAH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 374 077

A Professional Development School's Impact on Student Teachers' Attitudes

Gary J. Benton

Gloria D. Richardson

Mississippi State University, Meridian Campus

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the

Mid South Educational Research Association

New Orleans, Louisiana

November 10-12, 1993

Running Head: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

G Richardson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SP035014

Table of Contents

Abstract 2

Introduction 3

Sample 5

Data Collection and Analysis 6

Conclusions and Recommendations 14

References 16

Table 1 17

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if student teachers' attitudes toward their student teaching experiences differed significantly after the addition of professional development school experiences. Two groups of student teachers (Spring, 1992 and Spring, 1993) were compared using the Mississippi Student Teaching Attitude Inventory (MSTAI) constructed by Benton and Richardson (1990). Both groups consisted of 35 students.

A oneway analysis of variance revealed significant differences for seven of the 38 items. Students in the Spring, 1993 Group reported more favorably on such statements as: "I enjoy teaching" and "Using more than two teaching methods during a class period is not difficult."

Implications for the use of the MSTAI include: longitudinal group comparisons, restructuring of courses and programs, utilization of findings to implement further professional development opportunities and changes.

Introduction

During the 1979 annual conference of the Association of Teacher Educators, Dr. Lon Tutly offered three predictions relating to teacher education. "(a) Teacher educators must go into the field to teacher centers. (b) Teacher educators must become more targeted to special problems and populations. (c) The entire profession must participate in designing teacher education programs."

These predictions today are manifested in the Professional Development School movement.

Many of the educational practices found in Professional Development schools can be traced to the Lab schools of the 1960's. These schools were generally operated by a University. Today's Professional Development schools focus on much more.

A literature review indicated that the term is relatively new. Prior to 1985 no significant references to professional development schools were found. It was not until 1989 that references to these schools began to appear. The literature is proliferated with articles dealing with how to establish pd schools, why they are important, how they can change the teacher education programs and how beneficial they are to all

participants. There is however, limited research to support their impact on pre-service teachers.

During the fall, 1990, Mississippi State University-Meridian Campus formed a partnership with a local school district which resulted in the formation of two Professional Development Schools. Many of the concepts advocated by the Holmes Group are evidenced in this partnership. In-service teachers participate with college instructors in planning educational experiences for pre-service teachers. On-site instruction, shared decision making, collaboration and cooperation are all evident. Student practicum assignments are conducted in the PD school. In addition, other schools which participate with the University in the student teaching program are implementing many of the concepts associated with PD schools.

Attitudes which students have regarding their ability to teach as they enter the student teaching phase of their program has been a concern of MSU-Meridian faculty. Analysis of NTE scores, grade point averages and performance on the MTAI indicate that students graduate with a strong knowledge and skill base. The attitudes they bring with them to the teaching experience however has not been adequately

measured.

The purpose of this study was to determine if participation in professional development schools had an impact on the attitudes of Student teachers.

Sample

The sample of this research study was limited to 35 student teachers in Spring, 1992, and 35 student teachers in Spring, 1993, at Mississippi State University-Meridian Campus. For 1992, there 2 males and 33 females. For Spring, 1993, there were 5 males and 30 females. One of the males in the 1993 group was African American; the remainder of the participants were caucasian. These groups of student teachers included grades K-12; however, the majority practice taught at the elementary or middle school levels. The schools which provided cooperating teachers were located in approximately 7 counties in East Central Mississippi. Two of these schools served in a Professional Development School capacity during the 2 years of this group's educational program. Teachers in these schools participated as partners with college faculty by providing on-site teaching and practicum experiences in math, reading, and language arts. In-service teachers

were employed on a part time basis by the University and played a major role in teaching methods courses.

Both schools met the following criteria established by the Michigan Partnership for a New Education (1991): "Professional Development Schools are community centered schools where teachers, university faculty, school and university administrators join together in working relationships to study, plan, and implement programs and methods designed to create new educational opportunities for youth and adults."

Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected during the Professional Seminar in the Spring semesters of 1992 and 1993. The instrument used was The Mississippi Student Teacher Attitude Inventory developed by Benton & Richardson (1989-1990). Reliability was previously established with a Cronbach alpha of .9278 and a standardized item alpha of .9081. The Mississippi Student Teacher Attitude Inventory contains 38 items which are related to the requirements for the MSU-Meridian education division's program as well as the requirements of the State Department of Education. Respondents' attitudes are measured on a Likert scale of 1 to 5. One corresponds to Strongly Disagree; 5 corresponds to Strongly

Agree. A 3 indicates Undecided.

The instrument was administered to the respondents as separate administrations at the end of the Professional Seminar during the Spring semester of 1992 and 1993. One-way analysis of variance yielded 7 items that were significantly different at the .05 level of probability.

Insert Table 1 about here

These items were:

Item 4: I enjoy teaching

Item 8: My student teaching responsibilities do not restrict my nonprofessional responsibilities.

Item 12: I feel that I am prepared to teach.

Item 18: I feel prepared to meet the needs of individual learners.

Item 21: My students regard me with respect and have confidence in my professional ability.

Item 28: My students have the opportunity for enrichment activities daily.

Item 33: Using more than 2 teaching methods during a class

period is not difficult.

Item 4 had an F Ratio of 4.4619 and an F Probability of .0383. The 1992 group's responses were as follows: 3 percent Disagree, 6 percent Undecided; 34 percent Agree, and 57 percent Strongly Agree. The 1993 responses were: 3 percent Strongly Disagree, 8 percent Disagree; 40 percent Agree, and 49 percent Strongly Agree. These percentages indicated that student teachers did enjoy teaching as much as they anticipated. The attitudes of the 1993 group were positive with 89 percent reporting Agree or Strongly Agree. The attitudes of the 1992 group were also positive. This reflects the shifting from idealistic expectations to more realistic expectation of the joy of teaching. Prior to practice teaching the majority of the student teachers in the 1993 group had practicum experiences and opportunities in the classroom, but most had never been in charge for a lengthy period of time. Observation of and interaction with other teachers did provide the opportunity to develop an awareness of the requirements of the actual classroom situation;however, one aspect of these groups training was their lack of reflection and their failure to do close observations when in actual classroom situations.

Item 8 had an F Ratio of 8.2219 and an F Probability of .0055. This item dealt with the student teachers' attitudes about their educational program and their nonprofessional responsibilities. For the 1992 group, 14 percent reported Strongly Disagree; 44 percent reported Disagree; 14 percent reported Undecided; 14 percent reported Agree, and 14 percent reported Strongly Agree. The 1992 student teachers felt that their schoolwork would not interfere unduly with their lives, family responsibilities, and other interests. The 1993 group administration yielded 8 percent who reported Strongly Disagree; 17 percent who reported Disagree; 43 percent who reported Agree and 26 percent who reported Strongly Agree. The 1993 student teachers found that their time demands for practice teaching did restrict their nonprofessional responsibilities. Most of the student teachers were not aware of how much planning time was required to conduct classes for an entire day over a two-week period of time. Also, many of the student teachers discovered that they needed more time to consult with their cooperating teacher to learn about curriculum matters, classroom discipline and management, and other housekeeping and record-keeping requirements.

Item 12 was related to the student teachers attitudes toward their

preparatory program and their readiness to teach. This item had an F Ratio of 4.2723 and an F Probability of .0425. For Item 12, the 1992 group, 3 percent of the student teachers reported Strongly Disagree; 3 percent reported Disagree; 37 percent reported Agree and 57 percent reported Strongly Agree. For the 1993 group, 8 percent reported Strongly Disagree; 23 percent reported Agree and 77 percent reported Strongly Agree. In comparison, the 1992 group did not feel as sure of themselves as the 1993 group did after practice teaching. practice teaching. The practice teaching experience obviously increased the sense of efficacy and capability of the 1993 group of student teachers who reported improved attitudes toward their preparation for teaching. Strengthening the preparatory program with the addition of the Professional Development School concepts appeared to benefit the 1993 group.

Item 18 stated: "I feel prepared to meet the needs of individual learners." This item had a F Ratio of 8.0541 and an F Probability of .0060. Three percent of the 1992 respondents reported Strongly Disagree; 3 percent reported Disagree; 6 percent reported Undecided; 51 percent reported Agree, and 39 percent reported Strongly Agree. For

the 1993 administration, there were no respondents reporting for Strongly Disagree, Disagree or Undecided. Thirty-four percent reported Agree and 66 percent reported Strongly Agree. The notable change in this item indicated a change in positive response for the 1993 group. The 77 percent reporting Strongly Agree after practice teaching indicated that these student teachers felt that their preparatory courses and their practice teaching experiences were sufficiently strong to help them to know and to meet the individual needs of learners. The practicum experiences had provided a ground work of learning styles and teaching styles that served to provide a positive attitude toward meeting individual needs. Watching experienced teachers apply these skills in the classrooms of the 2 PD schools for a period of 2 years was an invaluable lesson. The efficacy of the PD school arrangement appeared to function better with this group of student teachers.

Item 21 dealt with interpersonal relationships and student respect and confidence in the student teachers' professional abilities. The F Ratio for this item was 7.5237, and the F Probability was .0078. For the 1992 group, 3 percent reported Strongly Disagree; 3 percent reported Disagree; 8 percent reported Undecided. Forty percent reported Agree,

and 46 percent reported Strongly Agree. In the 1993 group, none of the respondents chose Strongly Disagree, Disagree, or Undecided. Twenty-nine percent reported Agree, and 71 percent reported Strongly Agree. The positive attitudes reported by the 1993 group were derived from a successful practice teaching experience under the guidance of mentor teachers who had strong sense of self and strong management skills. The practice teachers learned much from the cooperation of teachers in classroom management and in how children react to positive social climate within that classroom. The PD school opportunities afforded the 1993 group proved to benefit them in regard to their confidence in themselves and helped to provide them with the ways to gain respect that was needed from their students.

Item 28 was significantly different between the 1992 administration and the 1993 administration. This item dealt with the concept of providing enrichment activities daily for students. The F Ratio was 4.6084; the F Probability was .0354. Three percent of the 1992 respondents reported Strongly Disagree; 8 percent reported Disagree, and 11 percent reported Undecided. Fifty-four percent reported Agree, and 24 percent reported Strongly Agree. After the practice teaching

activities, the 1993 group's responses were : zero percent Strongly Disagree; 3 percent Disagree; 3 percent Undecided; 57 percent Agree, and 37 percent Strongly Agree. The 1992 student teachers were not sure how many enrichment activities children were receiving in their classrooms. After observing the veteran teachers and planning and providing a number of enrichment opportunities during practice teaching, the 1993 student teachers had a much more positive attitude toward the amount of enrichment received; a total of 94 percent of the practice teachers were positive about the enrichment of students on a daily basis. Once again, it was possible to attribute this positive response to the training opportunities offered with the PD activities and from teachers who were involved with the university faculty in planning the educational program for the 1993 group.

Item 33 dealt with the capability of the student teachers to utilize a variety of teaching methods during the same class period. This item had an F Ratio of 11.2667 and an F Probability of .0013. Responses for the 1992 group were: 60 percent Agree and 40 percent Strongly Agree. For the 1993 group, responses were 23 percent Agree and 77 percent Strongly Agree. Student teachers in the 1993 group felt well-prepared

going into their practice teaching experiences; they felt even more positive and assured after practice teaching. Once again, this could be attributed to the powerful influence of professional development concepts provided during the students' preparation for teaching.

Conclusions and Recommendations

There is at present no way to effectively document how the professional development concept will work; it appears that a careful plan for creating a full professional development school system in conjunction with MSU-Meridian is an important and vital need for the preparation of students to function efficiently in the next century. Students who enjoyed some of the benefits of the beginning of this partnership between area schools, their teachers, university faculty and administrators, and their counterparts in local schools responded with positive attitudes toward a number of their experiences. In the building of this professional development system, a way must be determined to evaluate the program and its worth to the local teacher education majors who attend MSU-Meridian.

It is recommended that a careful record-keeping system be adopted; surveys constructed for all persons involved, including a

sampling of the students and non-certified personnel who participate in a professional development school. Also, a way must be found to benefit the professional staff of the schools through long-term staff development programs, new theories on classroom practices, action research, and collaborative encounters. This concept should follow the criteria established by the Holmes Group (1990) in its underlying principles of design:

Teach for understanding so that students learn for a lifetime.

Organize the school and its classrooms as a community of learning.

Hold ambitious learning goals for everybody's children.

Teach adults as well as children.

Make reflection and inquiry the central feature of the school.

Invent a new organization.

To follow this design, we must recognize that change is not easy nor necessarily convenient. There must be collaboration on the ways that teacher educators are prepared to take their places in the future educational systems--systems that will of necessity be radically different from those of the recent past.

References

Michigan Partnership for a New Education. (1991). Quality local school and university alliances: Guidelines for investing in exploration. Development and Operations of Professional Development Schools. (Working Paper, Board of Directors Meeting, September 26, 1991). East Lansing, MI: Author.

Woloszyk, C., & Davis, S. (1992). Professional development school handbook. Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 352 319)

Table 1

Oneway analysis of variance for significant items on the Mississippi Student Teacher Attitude Inventory: Pretest to post-test comparisons.

Item	F Ratio	F Probability
4	4.4619	.0383*
8	8.2219	.0055*
12	4.2723	.0425*
18	8.0541	.0060*
21	7.5237	.0078*
28	4.6084	.0354*
33	11.2667	.0013*

*Significant at $p < .05$.

END

U.S. Dept. of Education

Office of Educational
Research and Improvement (OERI)

ERIC

Date Filmed
January 23, 1995